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U.S. ARMY CIVIL AFFAIRS AND THE FATE OF RESERVE SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES IN SUPPORT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE OPERATIONS

by

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Since the late 1980's, soldiers holding the Civil Affairs (CA) specialty have been the most heavily mobilized and deployed element of the United States Army Reserve. This community currently supports operations in five different hazardous duty areas around the world and the current operations tempo does not appear to be abating any time soon. The Army has come to a strategic crossroad concerning one of its most utilized assets. The Army must decide how to support future operations when those service members who have been mobilized for the maximum time allowed by law are needed again. This paper will describe the CA mission, its deployment history over the past 15 years, and CA's current deployment. Additionally, the current CA manpower crisis will be analyzed and recommendations offered for continuing support to military operations around the globe.



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U.S. ARMY CIVIL AFFAIRS AND THE FATE OF RESERVE SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES IN SUPPORT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE OPERATIONS

"The process of going to war has not been easy for Army Reserve Soldiers".
-- LTG James R. Helmly, Chief, Army Reserve

Army Reserve and Army National Guard personnel have over the past two years seen the greatest number and frequency of mobilization since World War II. One particular community, Army Reserve Special Operations Forces (ARSOF), has experienced over 70 percent of their membership mobilized to support OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) and OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). Where is this leading the ARSOF and its component the Civil Affairs (CA) branch regarding continued support of current and future operations? This paper looks at what CA is, what it does, what it has done, what it is doing now and what the future appears to hold for the CA community.

CA units are defined as "designated Active and Reserve component forces and units organized, trained, and equipped specifically to conduct civil affairs activities and to support civil-military operations." Going beyond the "definition", retired Chief of Staff of the Army General Gordon Sullivan commented that: "Civil Affairs (CA) is one of the most complex and sensitive operations in which the U.S. Army can engage, involving interface between our soldiers and the civilians in the area of operations…its soldiers bridge the dangerous gap between the end of the war and the establishment of a stable foreign government capable of providing essential services." CA is that element that brings stability, and often times humanitarian assistance, to a war torn area after the "fighting" has ended. CA does this by executing the combatant commander's phase four (transition) plan in assisting the host nation to reconstruct its institutions and take care of its populace.

Civil Affairs is inherently a responsibility of command. The commander who fails to incorporate CA support into his campaign plan runs the risk of having his tactical successes erode and ultimately lose the strategic goal of the fight. CA provides expertise in stability and peacekeeping operations that allow the combatant commander the flexibility to help the host nation rebuild their infrastructure and become self governing again. There are four mission areas for Army CA, each having significant operational law guidelines: Conventional operations, support for special operations, civil administrations, and military assistance to domestic civil authorities.³

The CA community is a relatively small one. Currently, there is one Active Component (AC) battalion (strength 215) and four Reserve Component (RC) CA Commands (CACOM's)

whose strength totals about 5,600 service members. The RC accounts for 96 percent of the CA personnel strength in the Army. Within the four CACOM's there are six Brigade headquarters and 26 battalions distributed among 25 states. For command and control purposes all of these units belong to the United States Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) (USACAPOC(A)), a major command of the United States Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Funding for training and personnel assignment is handled by the United States Army Reserve.

CIVIL AFFAIRS MISSIONS

CA soldiers prepare for and execute operations that fall into six CA activities. There are strategic, operational and tactical considerations for each of the activities. The goal of CA is to transition the CA activities to indigenous civilian control as quickly as possible.⁵ Those activities include: Foreign Nation Support (FNS), Populace and Resource Control (PRC) Operations, Humanitarian Assistance (HA), Military Civic Action (MCA), Emergency Services (ES), and Support to Civil Administration (SCA).

Foreign Nations Support is civil or military assistance given to the US or its allies by a host nation or by other members of the international community during peacetime, crises, emergencies or war.⁶ Populace and Resource Control operations provide security for the populace, regulate the movement of or the consumption of material resources, mobilize human or materiel resources, deny personnel or materiel to the enemy, and detect and reduce the effectiveness of enemy agents. Populace control measures include curfews, movement restrictions, travel permits, registration cards and resettlement. Resource control measures include licensing, regulations, guidelines, checkpoints, ration controls and amnesty programs.7 Humanitarian Assistance is provided by US military forces to relieve or reduce conditions that present a serious threat to life or property. 8 Military Civic Action is the use of predominantly indigenous military forces to accomplish mitigating or developmental projects that will be useful to the local populace. An essential feature of MCA is that its projects also serve to improve the relations of the indigenous military forces or of that government with the populace.9 Emergency Services is the employment of the combined emergency management authorities, policies, procedures and resources of local, state and national governments in order to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from natural, man-made or technological disasters. ES includes incorporating voluntary disaster-relief organizations, the private sector, and international sources into a national response network. 10 Lastly, Support to Civil Administration operations help to stabilize or continue the operations of the governing body or the civil structure of an

operational area through civil assistance, civil administration in friendly territory, or civil administration in occupied territory. ¹¹

Within the six CA activities there are sixteen CA functional specialties that fall into four broad categories. Those categories are: government, economics and commerce, public facilities and special functions. The first three are self explanatory. The last, special functions, encompasses civil information, cultural relations, dislocated civilians, emergency services, and environmental management. The professional competence of CA personnel is derived principally from their civilian careers.¹² RC soldiers normally have a wider variety of CA skills and specialties than their AC contemporaries that can be brought to bear to perform a whole variety of missions.

CA provides a myriad of services to the Combatant Commander in a post-hostility environment. The previous operations listed have all been performed in post-hostility or peacekeeping missions. There is a dangerous gap between the end of war and the establishment of a stable host nation government capable of providing essential services. This "instability" gap is when there is potential for victory on the battlefield to be lost to upheaval, violence and disintegrating social structures. After military victory is achieved the next political objective becomes "stability". ¹³ CA assets provide essential assistance to the commander with his transition to theater stability. To that end commanders also need a transition plan for CA. CA does not stay until all political goals are achieved, but rather develops the process by which agencies such as the United Nations, US Agency for International Development, and the Non-Governmental Organization community can finish the long-term job of stabilization. The military's challenge is to determine when to disengage CA assets and transition to civilian control.

THE HISTORY OF CIVIL AFFAIRS

The US Army has been involved in managing civilian affairs of occupied territory since the Mexican War, but had no units solely dedicated to the task. CA was initially referred to as "Military Government" during World War II and was established to meet requirements for military specialists to administer areas liberated from Germany and Japan and to govern occupied areas in Germany and Japan during and after the war. ¹⁴ After World War II those units designated as "Military Government" were renamed "Civil Affairs." Few lessons were learned in Korea or Viet Nam with regards to CA. Winning the military victory was the primary concern for both the military and their political leaders.

Few military leaders considered what happened after the shooting stopped. It was not until OPERATION JUST CAUSE in Panama that CA's motto "Secure the Victory" took on a whole new meaning. Because involuntary mobilization under Presidential Selected Reserve Call-up (PSRC) was considered politically sensitive, only fragments of units and individual CA volunteers from many scattered units were actually in Panama.¹⁵ The total number deployed to Panama was less than 200. This led to not having the right skill sets available to perform the assigned mission. While some issues were resolved, such as restoration of the Panamanian police and government ministries, overall the performance was considered fair at best. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, stated "We did not plan well for reintroducing civil government."

This was not to be the case in OPERATIONS DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM (DS/DS). Shortly after the air war began in January 1991, then President George H.W. Bush mandated large scale involvement of Civil Affairs. OPERATIONS DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM heralded the largest RC call-up since World War II. CA was in the thick of that call-up and 1,132 CA personnel¹⁷ were mobilized for DS/DS. At the time that number represented approximately 20 percent of the available service members in USACAPOC(A). Later on after DS/DS ended and OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT began, an additional 200 CA personnel¹⁸ were mobilized to support humanitarian assistance efforts to Kurds in northern Iraq. At that time the rotations were approximately 179-270 days of total active duty.

OPERATION RESTORE HOPE in Somalia was another opportunity for CA to provide humanitarian assistance to a famine and war ravaged country. Over a nine month period 163 CA personnel¹⁹ were mobilized to support the operation. During this time members of the only AC battalion, the 96th CA battalion, also participated in this operation. However, their deployment was intended to last only until the RC could be mobilized to backfill them. This is a pattern that has developed over the last 15 years, with the AC being deployed first and then followed by mobilized reservists.

From 1994-1997 RC CA personnel supported OPERATION UPHOLD DEMOCRACY in Haiti. A total of 910 CA personnel²⁰ were mobilized for the operations there. In addition to the deployment of tactical CA elements, CA Reservists with high-level professional qualifications were assigned to the Ministerial Advisory Team (MAT), the military's executive agent for working with the Haitian ministries. During their time in Haiti the MAT's completed assessment reports for ministries of justice, finance and banking, commerce, education, foreign affairs, agriculture, health, public works, interior and others.²¹ Of all the missions undertaken by CA specialists for OPERATIONS UPHOLD DEMOCRACY this was the most significant since it

developed a benchmark not only for the Haitians, but also for the US Department of State and US Agency for International Development.

For OPERATION JOINT FORGE (OJF) in Bosnia, RC CA specialists began deploying in 1995 and continue to rotate through the area of operations today. As of October 2003, 2,691 CA personnel²² had deployed in support of this mission. It is expected that this mission will end in 2005, approximately eight years after the original projected end date. The mission there is to provide civil military operational and humanitarian assistance, functional team assessment and to have an ongoing MAT to assist the government.

Running concurrently with OJF is OPERATION JOINT GUARDIAN (OJG) in Kosovo. OPERATION JOINT GUARDIAN began in 1999 and is expected to be completed in 2006. Through 2003, nearly 800 CA personnel²³ have been deployed to OJG.

CIVIL AFFAIRS TODAY

Today's Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) is heavily dependent on RC CA assets. Since October 2001 the RC CA community has mobilized 4,000 CA personnel for OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE (ONE), OPERATION ENDURING FREEDON (OEF) and OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). These operations have required 70 percent of the available CA structure to be mobilized. Many of those service members have been either extended on their original mobilization or they have been mobilized for a second operation.

Of the 5,600 members in the RC CA community, all but about 1,600 have been mobilized in support of GWOT. Plans call for future rotations of CA specialists to Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Horn of Africa and Liberia. An important question is: Where will the assets come from to support these ongoing missions? The USAR is in danger of using up all of its CA resources and concerns are being voiced about the operations tempo's negative effects on retention and recruiting.

Is the RC CA force optimally organized to perform its role? The answer to that question continues to perplex the Army leadership. Structurally, it appears they have sufficient units to perform the mission but the number of personnel assigned to those units is not enough. For example Katherine McIntire Peters of *Government Executive Magazine* recently wrote "The 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion, which was assigned to the 3nd Infantry Division in the attack on Baghdad, was too small for the job. The division needed 15 teams of civil affairs soldiers to support its maneuver battalions, brigade headquarters and tactical operations center, yet the 422nd was able to provide only five such teams. In addition, the teams didn't have enough

firepower to defend themselves and their communications equipment was not always compatible with the units they were supposed to be supporting."²⁴

CURRENT INITIATIVES FOR CIVIL AFFAIRS

"If we go to war again, we're taking the reserves with us."

-- GEN Creighton Abrams, Army Chief of Staff

Many have argued that GEN Abrams intent was to closely integrate the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard with the active Army and thereby require the RC's early participation in any war. That participation would guarantee the support of the American people and their political leadership at the outset of any conflict. This came to be known as the "Abrams Doctrine." This "doctrine" along with Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird's "Total Force Policy" contributed to the revitalization of the RC. It signaled a return to the traditional reliance on the reserve components during war and extended that reliance to many additional operations. The reserves were assigned capabilities not needed in the active force structure but which in a time of war or national emergency would be required.

There are numerous reasons for increased reserve forces use, specifically Army Reserve CA, over the past 15 years. However, initiatives are under way to decrease the impact of using the reserves. For example, there are initiatives to change force structure, personnel policies, terms of service, and out-dated policies in order to create more rotational depth, improve readiness, enhance support to combatant commanders, and provide more predictability to the lives of Army Reserve soldiers.²⁸

The challenge for Army Reserve CA soldiers is to meet current missions, yet build for the future (transform). T. Trent Gegax of *Newsweek* writes "The Iraqi war has required the massive mobilization of Army Reservists – all those citizen soldiers who are doing the constable and civil affairs jobs at the heart of nation-building." He further adds that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's "rebalancing" would convert the most heavily used reserve jobs (a portion of civil affairs among them) into active duty positions. His purpose would be to eliminate the need for reservists to be called to active duty so often and so early. However, the Army Reserve leadership believes that such action will blunt the skills of future civil affairs soldiers because as reservists, civil affairs soldiers hone their craft when they are demobilized and working their law-and-order and government jobs back home.²⁹

In a memorandum to Department of Defense (DoD) leaders dated 9 July 2003, Rumsfeld addressed the need for rebalancing. Specifically, he stated "The balance of the capabilities in

the Active and Reserve components today is not the best for the future. We need to promote judicious and prudent use of the Reserve components with force rebalancing initiatives that reduce strain through the efficient application of manpower and technological solutions based on a disciplined force requirements process".³⁰

While Secretary Rumsfeld did not directly address any one military service or branch it is clear that he was looking at the CA community as one of the catalysts for his rebalancing effort. In an attachment to the original memorandum, under the heading "Actions for Force Rebalancing", it states "...Specifically address capabilities that reside exclusively or predominantly in the RC and are in high demand because of on-going operations and the Global War on Terror, capabilities that are required for homeland defense missions, and capabilities critical to post hostilities operations". ³¹(Emphasis mine). Army Reserve CA soldiers fit this description perfectly.

Acting Secretary of the Army, R. L. Brownlee, concurred with Secretary Rumsfeld in a memorandum to the Undersecretary of Defense on 31 July 2003. In the memorandum he states "The Army acknowledges an imbalance of capabilities between our Active and Reserve Components and shares the Secretary of Defense's urgency in effecting the necessary changes in support of that objective". He further explained how an alleviation of pressure on the RC might be effected: "... The next 5,000 spaces will realign the current Active-Reserve Component mix required for ongoing operations, Homeland Defense, and critical post-hostilities operations with a focus on high demand combat support and combat service support capabilities". See (Emphasis mine). Again, while not directly addressed, the focus is on CA and their critical specialties that they bring to post conflict/hostility operations.

It is important to examine what is being said by DoD leadership about citizen soldiers' mobilization, deployment and ultimate transformation. All three issues are faced by CA to an extent greater than most branches. When DoD justifies their recommended changes, CA is frequently used as an example to illustrate the seriousness of the force structure problem.

LTG James R. Helmly, Chief, Army Reserve, recently published an article where he addressed reserve mobilization and transformation. He wrote "As the Army end strength and structure were reduced during the last decade of the 20th century, the Army Reserve role changed dramatically from that of a force in reserve to a full partner in daily operations around the world. The Army reserve assumed the de facto role of an auxiliary of the Army, performing specialized, skill rich support functions...". 33 While it is certain that more than just CA was a part of this dramatic role change, there can be no doubt that CA deployments to places such as Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo were a large part of the Army Reserve's transformation

during the '90's. LTG Helmly further posits that "...Transforming the Army Reserve is not an option but a requirement that must be met...Operation Iraqi Freedom has added urgency to this requirement to transform."³⁴ This last statement gets at the heart of the problem faced by CA. Unless there is reengineering of the mobilization process and the building of a true rotational force the limited CA forces will be completely expended and their expertise lost or greatly diminished for the future fight. Mobilization authority, as prescribed by Title 10 U.S. Code only allows for service members to be mobilized for up to two years for a single operation. With no ability to involuntarily recall them for at least two years for the same operation.

THE WAY AHEAD FOR CIVIL AFFAIRS FORCES

While it remains uncertain what future operations will require, RC CA forces are likely to be needed to perform missions ranging from peacekeeping to contingency and stability operations. Throughout the recent past RC CA has shown it can meet the expectations of the military commander in a wide ranging spectrum of operations. What has become increasingly evident is that the RC CA is extremely effective when it exploits the civilian based skills of its personnel.35 Today whenever US military forces are deployed, RC CA forces can be found working side-by-side with their active duty counterparts. The future use of RC CA forces is dependent upon several important factors. One factor is the degree to which the Army will continue to rely on the RC citizen soldier. This would not be an issue in the event of a major theater war where demand for RC participation is obvious. There is little doubt that the RC will continue to be required in large numbers and in many specialty areas if this high level of support is needed.³⁶ However, what about a future similar to what we have now - two separate, long term fights (Iraq and Afghanistan) ongoing simultaneously along with the support of two peacekeeping operations (Bosnia and Kosovo). Long-term reliance on the RC CA force at the current level of demand has caused significant problems for a force not designed for sustained levels of support needed for current peacetime operations and day to day activities³⁷ in a post conflict/hostility environment.

Evidence is beginning to emerge to suggest that longer first rotations will make it difficult to retain personnel for their eventual rotation back to theater. In September 2003 the Army announced that all Reservists, already in the theater of operations, would have their mobilizations extended to support one year of time in theater (commonly referred to as "boots on the ground"). Army officials defended the new deployment order, saying the scarcity of active duty forces and security concerns in Iraq made it necessary to extend tours for a large number of RC forces, CA included, in the country for as long as possible. Many of the specialties

required in post war Iraq are almost entirely provided by National Guard and Army Reserve units.³⁸

Prior to announcement of tour extensions the standard was a 179 day employment period. To get 179 days of employment it requires 230 days to mobilize, transport, provide transition training, employ, redeploy and execute accrued leave. With the advent of OEF and OIF reservists were mobilized for 365 days, with the possibility of an additional 365 days. A two year mobilization is the maximum allowed by law under a partial mobilization authority. The extension of tours in theater and legal limitations on mobilization has caused the Secretary of Defense's office and the service's to take a hard look at RC utilization and accounts in a large part for the Army's consideration of restructuring and rebalancing its forces.

At the same time that mobilizations were extended to a year in early September, Department of the Army officials were saying that "to date they have seen no adverse impact on recruiting and retention in the Reserves despite the large number of troops deployed overseas."39 However, three weeks later in an interview with USA Today LTG Helmly was quoted as saying "Retention is what I am most worried about. It is my number one concern." He went on to add "This is the first extended-duration war the country has fought with an allvolunteer force." 40 to further amplify LTG Helmly's concerns, Robert Schlesinger of the Boston Globe recently published an article concerning the Army Reserve's inability to meet it's retention goals. "The Army Reserve missed its retention goal by 6.7 percent. It was largely the result of a larger than expected exodus of career reservists." ⁴¹ Again, while RC CA is not individually addressed, it can only be inferred that the most deployed branch in the Army Reserve would be voting with their feet in response to more, and longer, mobilizations and deployments. Lastly, in an article by Phillip O'Connor and Ron Harris of St. Louis Today, the authors reference the fact that the Army Reserve has deployed ten times in the last twelve years. The authors also quote James Carafano, a defense expert with the Heritage Foundation, "What nobody ever anticipated was the protracted global war on terrorism." He further stated "We have a force ill-structured for the mission, If this really turns into a protracted campaign and we have to sustain this for five or six years or more, the current system won't sustain that. It needs to be restructured."42 At least for CA it is obvious we have reached that point. The US Army is entering into its third year in Afghanistan and about to embark on its second year in Iraq. How long they spend in the Horn of Africa and Liberia is unknown at this point.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the CA community cannot maintain the pace the Army has set for them. With over 70 percent of the CA specialists already having been deployed in support of ONE, OEF and OIF. The number of personnel are just not available to provide assistance to the combatant commander. Continued inability to retain soldiers with the skills to conduct peacekeeping and stability operations will leave the Army with an undermanned and underqualified personnel base to conduct such missions. Also, once used in a 24-month mobilization, by law they cannot be mobilized for a year. And then only for a different operation.

Over the near term-that is about the next 12 months-the Department of Defense plans to deploy a substantial fraction of its ground forces for occupation duty in Iraq. Over longer periods, however, the need to maintain training and readiness levels, limit family separation and involuntary mobilization, and retain high-quality personnel would most likely constrain the US occupation force to be smaller than it is now.⁴³ The current plan for the next rotation of RC CA to the five hostile-fire areas is equal to about 1,100 personnel. Further reducing the personnel available to support current and future operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is little doubt the Army must address the issues confronting the RC CA community. There are four actions that could be taken to alleviate the strain on those reservists who make up the bulk of the CA force. First, before deciding to restructure/rebalance, the Army should investigate the full range of possible rotation options and policies for different types of organizations, such as RC CA, versus a blanket policy for all units. Selectively changing rotation policies may provide a feasible short-term solution and avoid the long and expensive restructuring process. Possible solutions could be limiting the deployment of RC CA units to no more than 180 days with a complete rotation through the command. However, if operations tempo remains constant, such a solution would only be temporary and increase in structure would eventually be necessary.

Second, increase active duty CA end strength. Overall permanent end-strength growth is not being sought by the Army leadership at this time and DoD opposes an increase. Congress is considering increasing end-strength. If increased, a portion could be used to allow for the growth of more CA battalions without taking from other branches. An effective use of additional CA soldiers would be to increase the strength of the AC's current battalion, the 96^{th,} to approximately 450 personnel and then develop another three AC battalions and have the four battalions be aligned to the geographical combatant commands outside of North America. This

would allow for robust support to key missions in each of those areas. In creating the new battalions it would allow for a lesser, but still important, role of the RC CA units to conduct follow-on missions as needed. This would also mean that the RC mobilizations and deployments could be shorter than one year as currently proposed, and still support missions at current levels.

A third option is to offer economic incentives for volunteers to extend in selected current assignments or to return to previous assignments. More RC CA personnel could be provided for post conflict missions during the next one to three years without causing undue hardship, by supplementing mobilized personnel with volunteers. Personnel who had already been deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan or the Horn of Africa and would not be scheduled for another deployment might be offered a bonus to voluntarily extend their tours or take an additional tour. The extension would be in a status other than mobilization such as a temporary tour of active duty (TTAD). Such a bonus, or offer of TTAD, would encourage some individuals to accept more frequent deployments voluntarily, and could, in turn, alleviate the stress that increasing deployment tempo would have for some personnel, particularly for those with family or civilian employment demands.

Lastly, increase structure within the current RC CA units and begin to cross-level from non-deployable or rarely deployed units. This does not create a growth in RC end-strength but would provide spaces in already established units that could be filled to alleviate the current strain. The training curve would be nominal since the whole concept of the RC CA force is the utilization of civilian acquired skills. This recommendation is internal to the RC and consistent with proposals for restructuring provided by the Chief, Army Reserve.

From an internal perspective all of these could work if applied appropriately. Most likely a combination of the above scenarios could be executed to shape and rebalance the force. For instance, option three could provide short-term relief while option four is a mid-term solution. Option two would take longer to implement and depends on legislative changes. Before any of them can be implemented it will take a concerted effort by the Army leadership to agree upon a desirable goal and then a means to achieve that goal. The Army is already addressing the problem but it appears that no immediate solution has been identified and that it might be years before they are able to achieve a rebalancing that will be equitable and useful.

WORD COUNT= 4753

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 - ⁴⁰ Dave Moniz. "Army Reserve Fears Troop Exodus." USA Today, 30 September 2003, 1.
- ⁴¹ Robert Schlesinger. "Army Reserve Battling an Exodus." *The Boston Globe*, 23 November 2003.

⁴²Phillip O'Connor and Ron Harris. "Call to War Jolts Part-Time Soldiers and Families," *St. Louis Today*. 1-6

⁴³ Congress of the United States, *An Analysis of the U.S. Military's Ability to Sustain an Occupation of Iraq*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Budget Office, 3 September 2003.

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